

Weekly Reader[®]

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Senior Edition

Will Congress Act To Clean Up U.S. Skies?

See story on pages 4-5.

'Big Maks' a Hit In Moscow

Where can you order *Big Maks*, *Chizburgers*, *Kartofel-fries*, and ice-cream *koktels*? At the Moscow McDonald's!

When the first McDonald's in the Soviet Union opened recently, thousands of people crowded into the 700-seat restaurant for their first American fast-food meal.

"It tasted great!" said a Soviet teen. But a Soviet elementary teacher was more impressed by the polite service than the food.

The teacher plans to bring her students with her the next time she goes there so they can hear cheery statements such as "Can I help you?" and "Thank you."

The teacher was also impressed with how hard the Soviet employees in McDonald's worked to serve



Soviet kids sample ice-cream *koktels* (shakes) at the recently opened Moscow McDonald's.

the huge crowd of customers.

"We can learn a lesson from this," she said. "What is killing us is that the average person doesn't know how to work."

McDonald's has 11,300 restaurants in 52 countries. The chain plans to open many more restaurants in the Soviet Union, including 19 more in Moscow.

Communist Rule To End in U.S.S.R.?

By summer, the Communist Party may not be the only party in the Soviet Union. But President Mikhail Gorbachev may have even more power than he has now.

After three days of debate, the Soviet Union's Central Committee voted to change the Soviet consti-

tution, which says that the Communist Party must run the country.

Since 1917, the Communist Party has been the only party allowed in the Soviet Union. But recently, many people in the Soviet Union's 15 republics have been demanding change.

Before new parties can form, two more groups, the Supreme Soviet and the Congress of People's Dep-

uties, must approve the change in the Soviet constitution. That is expected to happen by summer.

While the Communist Party is still in power, officials may change the government to give the president more power.

Under the planned system of government, experts say, Gorbachev would have about as much power as a U.S. President has.

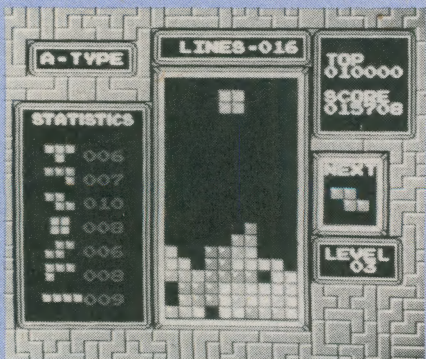


Photo courtesy Tetris

Nintendo Champ To Be Crowned

Who will be Nintendo champion of the world? No one knows yet. But about one million people are expected to compete for the title.

Last week, about 12,000 people were expected to show up for the first round of the Nintendo World Championships in Dallas, Tex.

Similar contests are scheduled in 29 other cities in the U.S. and Canada. A handful of winners from each city will meet in the finals in Orlando, Fla., in October.

Nintendo, the Japanese video-game maker, is sponsoring the championships. The cartridge used by competitors combines elements from the Super Mario Bros., Rad Racer, and Tetris games.

Scientists Save Crumbling Books

Scientists are trying to rescue thousands of old books in the world's libraries before they crumble into dust.

Many of these books are in the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. About 77,000 of the books in the Library of Congress turn to dust each year. And an estimated 4 million maps and 3 million sheets of music in the library are in danger of becoming so brittle that they could break apart when they are touched.

Acid Destroys Paper

Why are all these books and papers falling apart? Most books and materials published since the mid-1800's are printed on paper made of wood pulp, which contains acid.

Over time, this acid causes the paper to become brown and brittle. Eventually, the paper may crumble into confettilike pieces.

Books Are Gassed

Scientists are working with the Library of Congress on a process to save old books and documents.

Scientists place the books and



Old books can become so fragile that they turn to dust.

papers in a tank that is something like a huge pressure cooker.

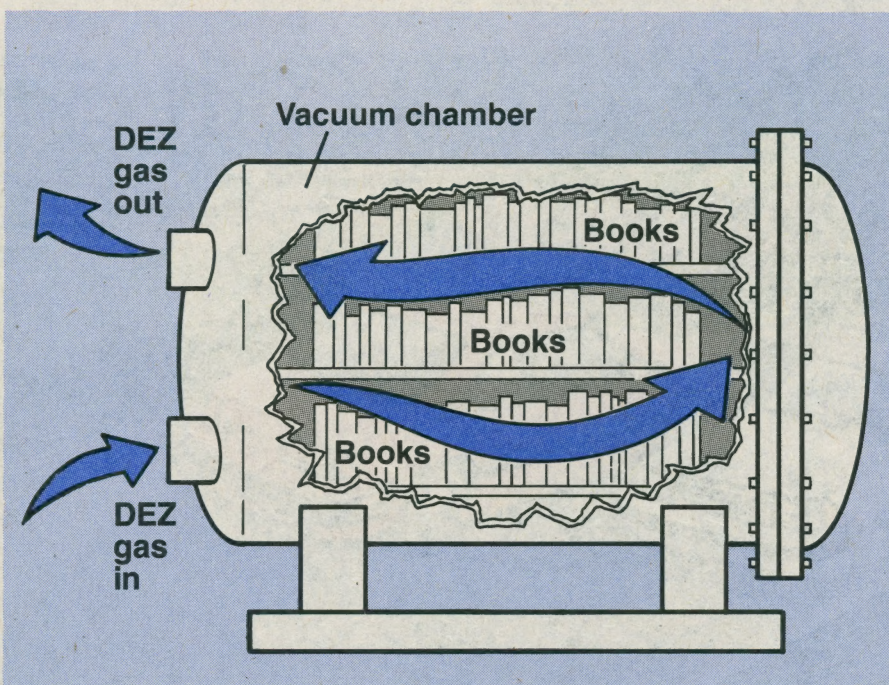
Machines remove all the air from the tank to create a vacuum. When the air comes out, so does all the moisture in the paper.

When the books and papers are

completely dry, scientists pump a gas called diethyl zinc (DEZ) into the tank. Clouds of DEZ fill the tank and penetrate every page inside. The DEZ acts to neutralize the acid so it can't continue to break down the paper.

The process takes about 60 hours, but scientists say it's worth the time because treated books and papers will last about another two centuries.

The process is expensive at \$6 to \$10 a book. But, scientists say, the only other way to save the books would be to put them on microfilm. That would cost about \$70 per book.



Scientists place fragile books in a tank. A pump takes all of the air and most of the moisture out of the tank. Then scientists pump DEZ gas into the tank. The gas seeps between the pages of the books and neutralizes the acid that causes the paper to break down. After several hours, the gas is pumped out and the books are removed.

—Art by Bob Italiano

—Alzo Chemicals, Inc.

Main News

In the U.S. Capitol, Congress is debating a new Clean Air Act that would clean up polluted U.S. skies. The illustration shows the major sources of this pollution.

Will Congress Act To Clean Up U.S. Skies?

- In some U.S. cities, the air is so dirty that taking a breath is like taking a puff of a cigarette.

- In the northeastern part of the U.S., many lakes, rivers, and streams are "dead." They have been damaged so much by acid rain that fish and plant life can't survive.

- An area along the Gulf Coast in Texas is called the Golden Triangle. But many people now call it the Toxic Triangle because the air is so filled with poisonous or dangerous chemicals from factories. Some experts say these chemicals may be the reason for a very high cancer rate among local residents.

Most U.S. experts agree that dirty air is a national emergency. But how can the air be cleaned up? And who will pay for the cleanup?

A new Clean Air Act now being debated in the U.S. Congress could provide the answers to these questions. The bill attacks three major kinds of air pollution.

Car exhausts cause smog in cities.

- **Smog.** This haze that hangs in the air of about 100 U.S. cities is formed mainly by the exhaust from car engines.

The first Clean Air Act, passed 20 years ago, forced carmakers to design cars that would reduce the dangerous chemicals in car exhausts. The new Clean Air Act would require carmakers to reduce car exhaust even more.

- **Acid rain.** Rain becomes "acid" when water droplets in clouds mix with chemical gases or dust in the air. One of the most common causes of acid rain is sulphur dioxide. The major U.S. source of this gas is electric power plants in the Midwest that burn high-sulphur, or "dirty," coal. The Clean Air Act would require these plants, by the year 2000, to reduce the amount of sulphur dioxide that they pour into the air by 10 million tons.

- **Chemical pollution.** There are about 280 poisonous chemicals spewed into the air daily by U.S. factories, oil refineries, and garbage-burning plants. But only seven of these 280 chemicals are regulated by the Government. The Clean Air Act calls for 180 more chemicals to come under Government control.

The Price of Clean Air

Most Congress watchers say the Clean Air Act will pass. But they also say that there is likely to be a heated debate first about who should pay the estimated \$40 billion per year for the cleanup.

- Carmakers say the pollution control devices required under the Clean Air Act wouldn't cut emissions much more than do devices on today's cars. But the new devices would increase car costs, carmakers say. They fear that a price hike might hurt car sales.

- Owners of Midwest electric plants say that they can't afford the estimated \$4 billion that would be needed to buy pollution-control devices to meet the Clean Air Act requirements. And customers of these electric plants say they would end up paying higher

prices for electricity if the plants have to install the devices. These people say it would be fairer if everyone in the U.S. shared in the cost of cleaning up acid rain, which is a problem mainly in the East, not the Midwest. (Acid rain clouds form over the Midwest power plants, but the clouds usually blow far to the east before dropping their polluted rain.)

- Factory owners say the cost of controlling gases from their factories might be so high that they would have to close down their factories.

- President George Bush and others say that the \$40 billion annual cost for the Clean Air Act is too high a price for U.S. businesses to pay. Bush says he won't sign the bill into law unless its price tag is closer to the \$19 billion he has proposed to Congress.

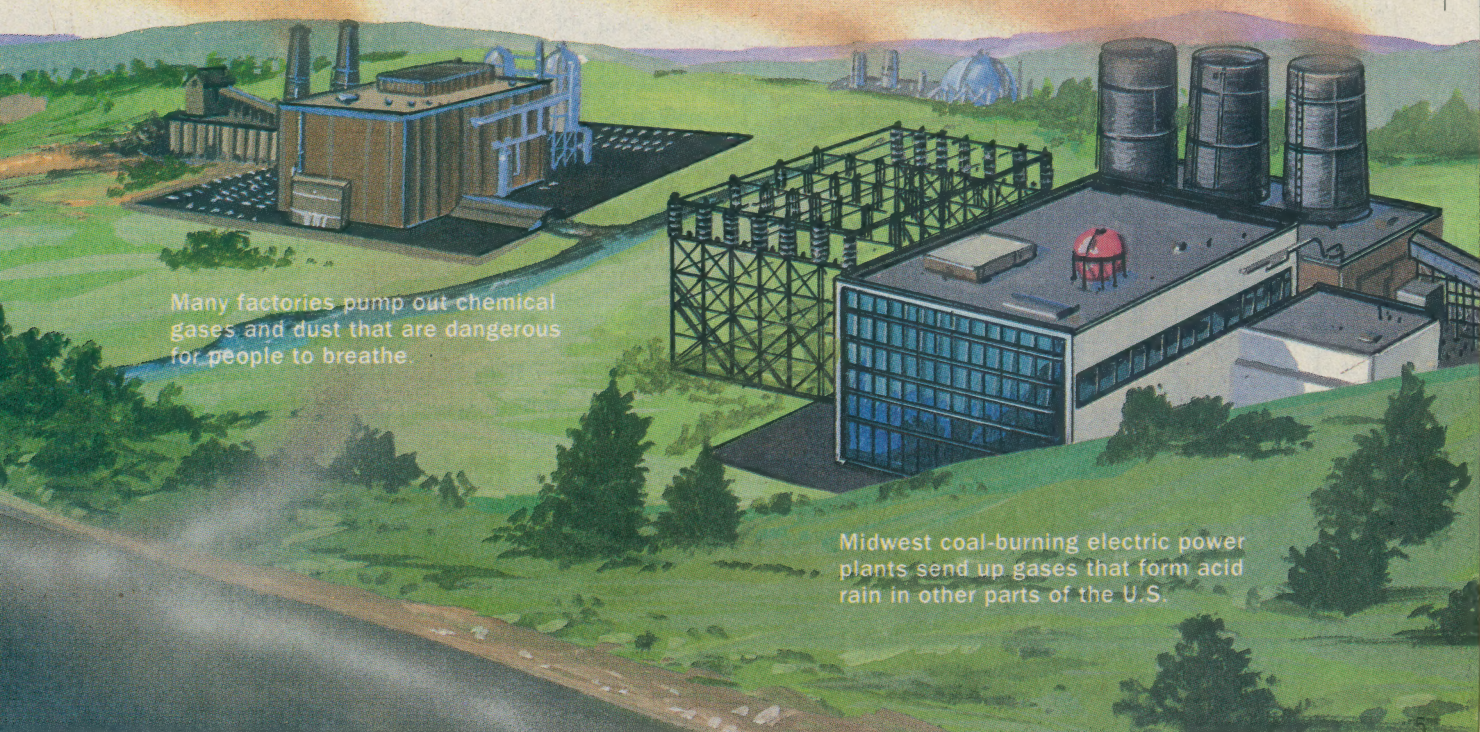
The Price of Dirty Air

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell of Maine, who is leading the fight to pass the Clean Air Act, agrees that air cleanup costs are high. But, he says, they are far less than the healthcare costs of pollution.

The American Lung Association says that the U.S. could save \$40–\$50 billion a year in healthcare costs if the Clean Air Act passes. The association says that if skies were cleaner, far fewer people would miss work or be hospitalized because of illnesses such as bronchitis and emphysema, which have been linked to pollution.

Supporters of the Clean Air Act hope that Congress sends the bill to the President to sign by Earth Day, April 22.

Class Project: Write a letter to let your senator or U.S. representative know what your class thinks about the Clean Air Act. Then watch the news to find out whether the bill passes—and to see how far it goes toward cleaning up U.S. skies.



Many factories pump out chemical gases and dust that are dangerous for people to breathe.

Midwest coal-burning electric power plants send up gases that form acid rain in other parts of the U.S.

Do You Need Glasses?

By Pat Fosarelli, M.D.
Johns Hopkins Children Center

How can you tell if you need glasses?

You might think that if your parents or brothers or sisters wear glasses, you will have to wear them someday too. You may even have heard someone say that bad eyes run in your family.

But if other members of your family wear glasses, that doesn't mean you will. Each person's eyes are different.

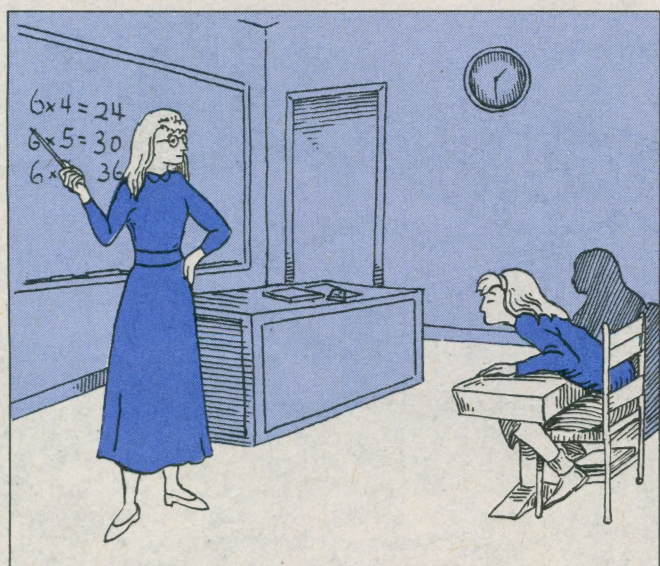
If you do need glasses, you'll probably be the first one to know. Here are some telltale signs.

- You have to sit close to the chalkboard or the TV to see clearly.
- You have to hold books closer to your eyes than you used to. (You should be able to see words on the pages of most books clearly from a distance of about 12 inches.)
- You have to squint to see some things better.
- You get headaches from reading.

If you have trouble seeing, tell your parents. They can take you to an eye doctor for an exam. The doctor may find that you need glasses just for reading. But if the doctor says you should wear your glasses all the time, it's important to do just that.

You should have your eyes examined regularly even after you have your glasses or contact lenses. Eyes change over time. Sometimes vision improves; sometimes it gets worse. If your eyes change, your glasses must change too.

Remember: Wearing glasses can be the beginning of a whole new world—one you can see!



If you have to squint to see the chalkboard, you may need glasses.



Patrick Ewing is a top NBA scorer this year.

Ewing Knows How To Win

Patrick Ewing is a winner. The 7-foot-tall center from Cambridge, Mass., led his high school basketball team to three state titles. In college, Ewing helped Georgetown University win the 1984 college championship. And later that year, Ewing won a gold medal for basketball in the Olympics.

Now Ewing is helping his new team—the NBA's New York Knicks—to win. And Ewing is doing such a good job that some people say he could win this season's Most Valuable Player award.

A Rough Start

Ewing didn't even see a basketball until he was 12 years old. That was the year his family moved to the U.S. from Jamaica.

School wasn't easy for Ewing. In Jamaica, English isn't spoken in the same way as it is in the U.S., so Ewing often had trouble with his schoolwork.

At Georgetown University, Ewing continued to need help with his studies. But he was determined to finish school. He even turned down a \$1 million NBA contract because he would have had to leave school before he graduated.

Ewing says his college degree is important for his future. "I won't stop existing once I stop playing basketball," he points out.

Because of his education, Ewing is confident that he can be a winner, even if he isn't slam-dunking a basketball.

D.J. Is O.K.

Most 11-year-old girls think big brothers are pains. But 11-year-old Candace Cameron didn't feel that way about her big brother, Kirk. She thought her big brother was pretty special. For one thing, he was a TV star on a hit show, "Growing Pains." For another, his agent offered to help Candace get started on her own acting career.

Candace, now almost 14, has become a TV star just like her big brother. She is featured in the top-rated show "Full House."

A Different Kind of Family

On "Full House," Candace plays D.J. Tanner. D.J. lives with her two sisters, her father, her uncle, and a



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friend of the family. The three men are raising the three young girls on their own. This living arrangement leads to lots of laughs—and some serious moments too.

Before getting the role of D.J., Candace made TV commercials and appeared on other shows. She also had the chance to act with brother Kirk on "Growing Pains."

But acting isn't the only thing Candace enjoys. When she's not on the set or in school, Candace likes to ride her bike and play video games. And Candace has a hobby—collecting hats. If Candace's acting continues to go well, lots of folks may be taking their hats off to her!

Senior Sleuths

Senior Sleuths Tom and Jen are guarding their office safe for Mrs. Van Lippe, a wealthy art collector. She has left valuables in the safe. With the Sleuths is Andres, Mrs. Van Lippe's stepson.

"Why does your mother need special protection for her things?" Jen asks Andres.

"I don't know," Andres says, "but she has a reason for wanting one of us to always be here."

"I'm getting hungry," Tom says. "Andres, would you mind staying here while Jen and I go out?"

"Sure," Andres says. "I'll be fine."

The Sleuths pull open the door and leave.

When the Sleuths return, they see that the office

has been blown up. Inside, Andres is on the floor, surrounded by pieces of the wall. The Sleuths help Andres up. Andres is clean, but everything else is covered with dust—and the safe is empty.

"What happened?" Tom asks.

"After you left, I heard people at the door. I tried to keep the door closed, but they pulled it open. Three guys rushed in, and one of them hit me on the head. That's the last thing I remember. They must have blown up the vault while I was unconscious."

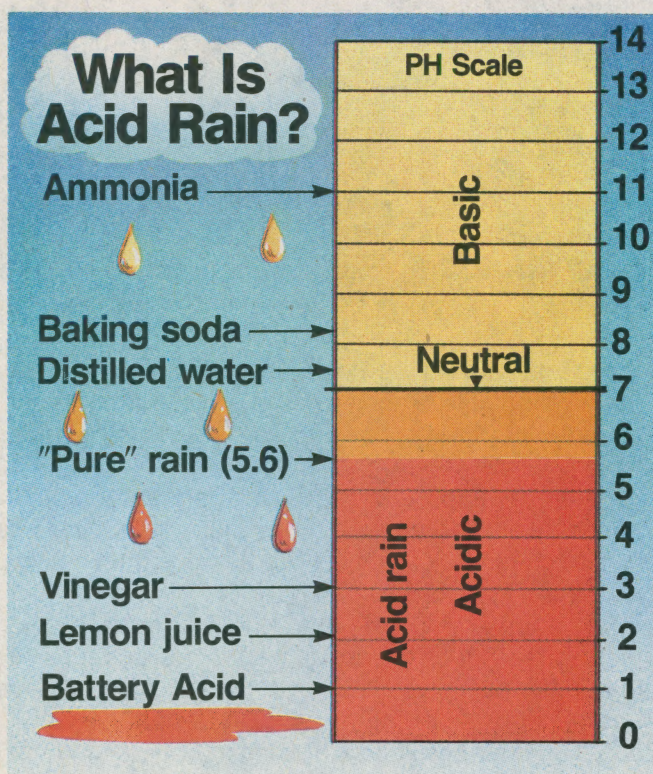
"Your story," Jen says "is a real bomb."

What two things made Jen doubt Andres' story?

Garfield

by Jim Davis



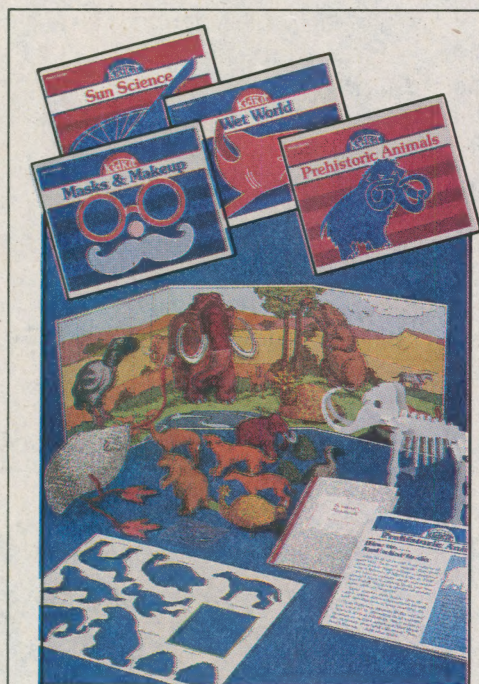


News Chart Reading

Study the chart at left. Then complete each statement by circling the correct word or words.

1. "Pure" rain is (*acidic, basic, neutral*).
2. Vinegar is (*more acidic than, less acidic than, about the same pH as*) "pure" rain.
3. If a sample of rainwater measured 5 on the pH scale, it would be about (*ten times more basic, ten times more acidic, 100 times more acidic*) than distilled water.
4. Human blood is (*slightly basic, strongly basic, slightly acidic*).
5. If rain had a pH of 1, it would be as strongly acidic as (*ammonia, battery acid, vinegar*).

◀ Scientists decide whether rain is acid by testing its pH. The pH scale ranges from 0–14; 7 is neutral. A substance with a pH below 7 is *acidic*. A substance with a pH above 7 is *basic*, or *alkaline*. For each point below or above 7, the pH is 10 times stronger. For example, a substance measuring pH 6 is 10 times more acidic than a substance measuring pH 7. And a substance measuring pH 9 is 100 times more basic than a substance measuring pH 7.



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